

Learning Acceleration Support Opportunities (LASO) 2023-2024

Early College High School Planning and
Implementation Grant
Program Guidelines



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Grant Program Guidelines

Grant Name as it will appear on the TEA Grant Opportunities Page	Early College High School Planning and Implementation Grant
Application Due Date	5:00 p.m. Central time, December 7, 2023
Program Authority	General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 58, 88th Texas Legislature

Introduction

The Texas Education Agency (TEA), as the pass-through entity¹, is the grantee² from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and TEA awards subgrants to non-federal entities³ such as local educational agencies (LEAs), including school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, and education service centers, and to a lesser degree institutions of higher education (IHEs), and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) who are the agency’s subgrantees⁴. These guidelines apply to all subgrantees of TEA, regardless of whether referenced herein as subgrantee or grantee. For purposes of this document, TEA may use the terms grantee and subgrantee synonymously for its subrecipients.

This document MUST be used in conjunction with the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) and the specific program instructions. The Standard Application consists of all forms to be completed in order for the applicant to be eligible for funding.

For applicants selected for funding, all guidelines and instructions will be incorporated by reference into the Notice of Grant Award (NOGA).

Reference to the General and Fiscal Guidelines

The Program Guidelines provide information specifically relevant to this grant program. The [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) provide information relevant to all TEA grant programs. Throughout the Guidelines, cross-references are given to applicable sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#). **It is critical that you review all referenced sections of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#) when preparing your application.**

¹ Pass-through entity is defined as a non-Federal entity that provides a subaward to a subrecipient to carry out part of a federal program. (2 CFR 200.74)

² Grantee is defined as the legal entity to which a grant is awarded and that is accountable to the federal government for the use of the funds provided. The term “grantee” does not include any secondary recipients, such as subgrantees and contractors that may receive funds from a grantee. (34 CFR 77)

³ Non-federal entity is defined as a state, local government, Indian tribe, institution of higher education, or nonprofit organization that carries out a federal award as a recipient or subrecipient. (2 CFR 200.69)

⁴ Subgrantee is defined by TEA to be the same as a subrecipient which is defined as a non-federal entity that receives a subaward from a pass-through entity to carry out part of a federal program; but does not include an individual that is a beneficiary of such program. (2 CFR 200.93) Subgrantee is defined in 34 CFR 77 as the legal entity to which a subgrant is awarded and that is accountable to the grantee for the use of the funds provided.

Overview of the Process

The following steps provide a high-level overview of the process for responding to a grant opportunity, including submitting an application, and being selected for funding:

1. TEA publishes grant application and supporting documents on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) webpage.
2. Eligible applicants submit grant application via Qualtrics to TEA by the specified deadline on the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) webpage.
3. Grant applications are reviewed and scored. Note: Applicants may be required to attend an oral interview or respond to additional questions regarding their application.
4. TEA announces applicants selected for funding on the TEA [Grants Awarded Data](#) webpage.
5. ***Awarded applicants will be required to submit an eGrants application for funding.***
6. TEA staff conducts budget negotiations on the eGrants application.
7. The Notice of Grant Award (NOGA) will be issued upon successful completion of the negotiation process.

U.S. Department of Education and/or State Appropriations

The following is provided in compliance with the U.S. Department of Education Appropriations Act:

CATEGORY	AMOUNT
Total funds available for this project	\$1,000,000
Percentage to be financed with federal funds	0%
Amount of federal funds	\$0
Percentage to be financed from nonfederal sources	100%
Amount of nonfederal funds	1,000,000

Applicant Assistance

The following types of assistance are available to applicants for this grant program.

Contact for Clarifying Information

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *TEA Contacts*.

The following TEA staff member should be contacted with questions:

Program manager name	Darin Ford
Program manager title	CCRSM Coordinator
Program manager email	ccrsm@tea.texas.gov
Program manager phone	(512) 463-1692

Errata Notices

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Errata Notices*.

DATE	EVENT
October 18, 2023; 1:00-2:00 p.m.	General Webinar schedule
October 19, 2023; 9:00-10:00 a.m.	Webinar registration link can be found on the LASO website
October 23, 2023	Grant application available
October 31, 2023; 9:00-10:00 a.m.	Program Specific Webinar schedule
November 3, 2023; 11:00-12:00 p.m.	Webinar registration link can be found on the LASO website
November 10, 2023	FAQ deadline
November 17, 2023	FAQ Publishing The FAQs for this grant program will be posted to the TEA Grant Opportunities and LASO website site no later than the date listed on the Grant Timeline. Applicants may email their questions to the LASO central inbox at LASO@tea.texas.gov
December 7, 2023	Due date for the application. The application must be received by the TEA by 5:00 p.m. Central Time. LASO individual application links will be emailed to Superintendents on October 23, 2023. Please see the LASO website for more information. <i>See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Application Due Date and Time</i>
January 2, 2024-January 25, 2024	Application review period, including interviews if necessary. <i>See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Review Process</i>
February 8, 2024	Anticipated award announcement
February 21, 2024	Beginning date of grant (if selected for funding) <i>See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Grant Period</i>
January 29, 2026	Final date to submit an amendment (if selected for funding)
April 30, 2026	Ending date of grant (if selected for funding) <i>See General and Fiscal Guidelines, Grant Period</i>

For all dates related to the grant, including reporting dates, see the [TEA Grant Opportunities](#) page. If a due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the date will be on the following business day. All dates except the grant ending date may vary slightly as conditions require.

Grant at a Glance

This section provides fundamental information pertinent to the grant program.

Authorizing Legislation

This grant is authorized by the General Appropriations Act, Article III, Rider 58, 88th Texas Legislature.

Where to Submit the Grant Application

LASO individual application links will be emailed to Superintendents on October 23, 2023. Please see the [LASO website](#) for more information.

Purpose of Program

The ECHS grant offers campuses an opportunity to plan to build an Early College High School within their district. Early College High Schools (ECHS) offer opportunities for campuses to provide targeted supports for historically underserved students through rigorous instruction and accelerated postsecondary courses to provide academic and wrap around strategies that help students succeed in college level coursework at no cost to the students.

Eligible Applicants

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Eligibility To Apply*
LEAs that:

- Serve students in Grades 9–12; or
- Will begin serving students in Grade 9 or students in Grades 9 and 10 in the first year of implementation (2025-2026) and will progressively scale up by adding at least one grade level per year after the first year of implementation.
- Any 23-24 ECHS planning, provisional or designated campuses are not eligible to apply.
- Furthermore, recipients of previous ECHS grants are not eligible to apply:
 - ECHS Planning and Implementation Grant (2021-2023; 2022-2024)
 - Any recipients of previous LASO - ECHS Grant

Education Service Centers (ESCs) are not eligible to apply.

Shared Services Arrangement

See the General and Fiscal Guidelines, Shared Services Arrangements.

Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are not allowed for this grant program.

Application Attachments

This section describes the required attachments that must be included with the application.

Required Attachments

See the following section of the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#): *Required Program-Related Attachments*

Program attachments must be submitted with the program application. For this grant application, you are required to submit 2 additional individual attachments.

- Letter of support from Institution of Higher Education for future ECHS campus.
- Application Narrative Questions:
 - **Program of Study**

Describe the course of study/crosswalk that the school is planning to offer and/or how it expands upon current offerings to enhance and build an academic pathway. Describe how the course of study will enable a student to combine high school courses and postsecondary courses and identify degrees/certificate/certifications to be earned. Describe how the postsecondary credentials earned meet local economic needs.
 - **Strategic Partnerships**

Describe how the campus and district intends to work with and secure the partnerships with an Institution of Higher Education and align the needs of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that addresses topics such as but not limited to: Curriculum Alignment, Instructional Materials, Instructional Calendar, Courses of Study, Student Enrollment and Attendance, Grading Periods and Policies and Administration of Statewide Assessment Instruments.

Application Requirements and Assurances

This section describes the types of requirements that applicants must assure adherence to in order to be eligible to be considered for funding:

- Statutory requirements (requirements defined in the authorizing statute)
- TEA program requirements (requirements defined by TEA program staff)

Statutory Requirements

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Statutory Requirements*.

Per TEC §22.0834, any person offered employment by any entity that contracts with TEA or receives grant funds administered by TEA (i.e., a grantee or subgrantee) is subject to the fingerprinting requirement. TEA is prohibited from awarding grant funds to any entity, including nonprofit organizations, that fails to comply with this requirement. For details, refer to the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Fingerprinting Requirement*.

1. The ECHS campus must establish recruitment and enrollment processes and requirements that will not exclude or discourage the enrollment of any of the subpopulations of at-risk students, including, but not limited to, students who are of limited English proficiency or who have failed a state administered assessment.
2. The ECHS campus must provide a course of student that enables participation students in grades 9-12 to earn a high school diploma, earn an associate degree or up to 60 college credit hours.
3. The ECHS campus must enter into an articulation agreement with IHEs that are accredited by a national or regional accrediting agency recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in accordance with 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §74.25.

TEA Program Requirements

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Program Requirements*.

In addition to the statutory requirements, TEA has established the following program requirements. Applicants must address within the application how they will achieve the following:

1. The ECHS campus must establish a Leadership Design Team to guide the campus to begin serving students in the ECHS and provide leadership for the campus regarding ECHS. Leadership Design team members are outlined in the ECHS Blueprint.
2. The ECHS campus must develop wrap-around strategies and services involving multiple stakeholders (parents, teachers, counselors, community members, etc.) to strengthen both the academic, behavioral, and mental health supports necessary for high school and college readiness and to be successful in rigorous academic and work-based educational experiences.

Program-Specific Assurances

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Provisions and Assurances*.

The program-specific assurances are listed on the application.

1. Data report of projected student enrollment into the ECHS with percentage of demographics: students who are at-risk as defined by PEIMS (TEC 29.081), race/ethnicity, first-generation college students, English Learners, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities.
2. Leadership Team members, meeting dates, and agendas (including attendance) posted on the school's website.

3. Enrollment Guidelines that follow the enrollment requirements outlined in the statutory requirements of this grant. Enrollment Guidelines should clearly document enrollment policies and practices to include admissions policies of performance-blind, open access systems that encourage and considers applications from all students or a weighted lottery that factors 10 students who are at-risk as defined by the PEIMS (TEC §29.081) or who are part of the targeted subpopulations for ECHS.
4. Recruitment Plan that includes marketing materials (in English/Spanish) and timelines.
5. Stakeholder Input methods used to obtain input about the implementation of the program from students, parents, community, postsecondary partners, with regular activities to educate students, parents, counselors, community, district staff and school board members.
6. Academic year signed and dated memorandum of understanding (MOU) and course articulation agreement with one or more college partners that fulfills the statutory requirements of this grant. The agreement must address:
 - Curriculum alignment
 - Instructional materials
 - Instructional calendar
 - Courses of study that lead to an associate degree or up to 60 hours of college credit toward a baccalaureate degree.
 - Student enrollment and attendance
 - Grading periods and policies
 - Administration of statewide assessments
 - Data-sharing policies and procedures
7. Plan of wrap-around strategies and services to provide academic, behavioral, and mental health supports for student success to include:
 - Plan for academic mentoring of faculty and student supports for intervention and acceleration.
 - Counseling, guidance, and student advisory services for academic, behavioral, and mental health supports.
 - Behavioral and mental health supports such as parent outreach, connections to social services when needed, and peer mentoring.

Program Elements

This section provides detailed information about the grant.

Description of Program

The purpose of the Early College High Schools (ECHS) model is to allow students least likely to attend college an opportunity receive both a high school diploma and either an associate degree or at least 60 credit hours toward a baccalaureate degree. The ECHS provides dual credit at no cost to historically underserved students, targeting those who are at-risk and/or economically disadvantaged. The ECHS offers rigorous instruction and accelerated courses and provides academic and social support services to help students succeed in college level coursework. The ECHS provides students with highly personalized attention which promotes improvement in college readiness.

Recipients of the ECHS Planning and Implementation Grant will engage in months of ECHS model planning and implementation with support from TEA's selected technical assistance provider to establish the foundational components of the ECHS program, as outlined in Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.908(b) and the Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §102.1091.

Grantees who receive the ECHS Planning and Implementation Grant will use the first months of planning to implement the design elements and requirements aligned to the current ECHS Blueprint and serve students in the following school year. Technical Assistance for CCRSM Network campuses, such as ECHS Planning and Implementation Grantees, are provided at no cost to the LEA. If you are a recipient of this grant, no funds will be needed to pay for Technical Assistance provided via a CCRSM designated Technical Assistance provider.

ECHS campuses must partner with Texas institutions of higher education (IHEs) to reduce barriers to college access. The IHE partner(s) must serve on the ECHS Leadership Team to provide support and guidance to the ECHS in curriculum development, resource acquisition, and student/community outreach.

Together, the ECHS and IHE develop course equivalency crosswalks that lead to Level 1 and Level 2 certificates, associate degrees, and/or completion of the Texas Core Curriculum to provide stackable credentials as students advance on the academic pipeline.

Supplement, Not Supplant

For supplement, not supplant guidance, see the Supplement, Not Supplant Handbook on the Grants Administration Division's [Administering a Grant](#) page.

The supplement not supplant provision

- Applies
- Does not apply

The following sections designated by an asterisk () are not required and may be skipped by entering a NA if not applicable.*

*Qualifications and Experience

The applicant agrees to provide data on the qualifications and experience of the existing or future staff members, as required per the program guidelines as follows:

Does not apply to this grant program.

*Performance and Evaluation Measures

The applicant agrees to collect data and report on the following mandatory performance and evaluation measures:

1. Data Report of projected student enrollment into the ECHS with percentage of demographics: students who are at-risk as defined by PEIMS (TEC 29.081), race/ethnicity, first-generation college students, English Learners, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students with disabilities.
2. Leadership Team members, meeting dates, and agendas (including attendance) posted on the school's website.
3. Enrollment Guidelines that follow the enrollment requirements outlined in the statutory requirements of this grant. Enrollment Guidelines should clearly document enrollment policies and practices to include admissions policies of performance-blind, open access systems that encourage and considers applications from all students or a weighted 12 lottery that factors students who are at-risk as defined by the PEIMS (TEC §29.081) or who are part of the targeted subpopulations for ECHS.
4. Recruitment Plan that includes marketing materials (in English/Spanish) and timelines.
5. Stakeholder Input methods used to obtain input about the implementation of the program from students, parents, community, postsecondary partners, with regular activities to educate students, parents, counselors, community, district staff and school board members.
6. Academic year signed and dated memorandum of understanding (MOU) and course articulation agreement with one or more college partners that fulfills the statutory requirements of this grant. The agreement must address:
 - Curriculum alignment
 - Instructional materials
 - Instructional calendar
 - Courses of study that lead to an associate degree or up to 60 hours of college credit toward a baccalaureate degree
 - Student enrollment and attendance

- Grading periods and policies
 - Administration of statewide assessments
 - Data-sharing policies and procedures
7. Plan of wrap-around strategies and services to provide academic, behavioral, and mental health supports for student success to include:
- Plan for academic mentoring of faculty and student supports for intervention and acceleration.
 - Counseling, guidance, and student advisory services for academic, behavioral, and mental health supports.
 - Behavioral and mental health supports such as parent outreach, connections to social services when needed, and peer mentoring.

Limits on Contracted Evaluators

Applicants should make every effort to ensure that contracted evaluators be independent and objective.

Application Funding

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#): *Continuation Funding, Fund Management, and Use of Funds*

It is anticipated that approximately 10 grants will be awarded in the amount of \$100,000.

Selection of Applicants for Funding

Applicants will be selected in:

- Rank order
- Click or tap here to enter text.

Cost Share or Matching Requirement

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Cost Share/Match Requirement*.

TEA requires a:

- 20% cost share/match
- There is no cost share or matching requirement

Limitation of Administrative Funds

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Administrative Costs*.

NOTE: Administrative funds include **both** direct administrative costs **and** allowable indirect costs. TEA limits the amount of funds that may be budgeted to administer the program, including direct administrative costs and indirect costs, to no more than 15% of the total grant awarded.

To calculate the maximum indirect costs that can be claimed for a grant, complete the [Maximum Indirect Costs Worksheet](#), posted on the Administering a Grant page, under the Handbooks and Other Guidance section.

Pre-Award Costs

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Pre-Award Costs*.

Pre-award costs:

- are permitted
- are not permitted

Activities and Use of Funds

See the [Administering a Grant](#) page for general guidance on allowable activities and use of funds.

Allowable activities and use of funds may include but are not limited to the following:

Field Trips

Field trips

- may be funded under the grant program
- may not be funded under the grant program

Only the following types of field trips are allowable:

Trips to work-based sites, Institutions of Higher Education or other relevant ECHS activities.

Note *Field Trips will require a written justification form to be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request. To access the Field Trips Justification form, refer to the [Administering a Grant page](#).*

Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences

Hosting or sponsoring conferences

- may be funded under the grant program
- may not be funded under the grant program.

Conferences must be managed to minimize costs to the grant award. Only the following types of civic or community organization membership costs are allowable:

Conferences must be managed to minimize costs to the grant award.

Note: *Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences will require a written justification form to be maintained locally and made available to TEA upon request. To access the cost of Hosting or Sponsoring of Conferences Justification form, refer to the Administering a Grant page.*

Travel Costs for Officials such as Executive Director, Superintendent, or Board Members

Travel costs for officials such as the executive director, superintendent, or board members

- may be funded under the grant program
- may not be funded under the grant program.

Only the following travel costs are allowable for these positions

Relevant in-state ECHS travel.

General Allowable Activities and Use of Funds

- Curriculum planning and development materials and supplies for ECHS
- Convening of advisory council/leadership team including travel
- Limited travel for leadership team to visit exemplary and best practice schools
- Teacher professional development
- Salaries for instructional staff
- Teacher credentialing specifically related to identified programs of study
- Equipment necessary for implementation of identified programs of study
- Career counselor salary
- Salary for dedicated program director/administrator
- Day field trips for ECHS students to partner IHEs or partner industry sites
- Extra duty pay for instructors in the programs of study
- Supplies and materials for advisory council (excluding food, beverage, snacks)
- Staff and student tuition and fees for higher education, public, and nonpublic schools for the following:
 - Services rendered by institutions of higher education (IHEs) for the benefit of local educational agency (LEA) personnel when payment is made directly to the institution.

- Tuition when the LEA is under contract to provide instructional services to students.
- Other tuition and transfer payments not detailed above NOTE: If tuition is to be paid by the staff or student participant and then reimbursed upon completion of the course, budget this cost in Other Operating Costs (6400).

General Unallowable Activities and Use of Funds

In general, refer to the Budgeting Cost Guidance Handbook on the [Administering a Grant](#) page for unallowable costs.

- Audit services for state-funded grants
- Out of state travel
- Cost of membership in civic/community organization
- An advisory council
- Tuition and course fees for students
- Instructional materials for students
- Food, beverage, snacks

Scoring And Review

This section provides information on the scoring and review of grant applications.

Grant Review and Funding Criteria

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Review Criteria*.

All eligible LEA's grant applications will be evaluated based on the following categories:

Enrollment size

- Campuses under 5,000 students will receive 5 priority points
- Campuses between 5,000 and 10,000 students will receive 10 priority points

LEAs classified by TEA as Rural will receive 5 priority points. A list of schools by district type can be found at: <https://tea.texas.gov/reports-and-data/school-data/campus-and-district-type-data-search>

LEAs not currently participating in the CCRSM Network will receive 5 priority points.

If LEA funding requests exceed the amount available for this grant, oral interviews may be used. If used, applicants that receive 70% of the total points available through the sum of the narrative questions and priority point criteria will be invited to attend an oral interview, which will be conducted virtually. Prioritization based on enrollment size, rural classification, and participation in CCRSM Network.

Narrative Questions will be scored over 24 points.

Program of Study Narrative: 12 points

- Describe the course of study/crosswalk that the school is planning to offer and/or how it expands upon current offerings to enhance and build an academic pathway (4 points)
- Describe how the course of study will enable a student to combine high school courses and postsecondary courses and identify degrees/certificate/certifications to be earned (4 points)
- Describe how the postsecondary credentials earned meet local economic needs (4 points)

Strategic Partnerships: 12 points

- Describe how the campus and district intends to work with and secure the partnership with an Institution of Higher Education (4 points)
- Describe how the campus and district intends to align the needs of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that addresses topics such as but not limited to: Curriculum Alignment, Instructional Materials, Instructional Calendar, Courses of Study, Student Enrollment and Attendance, Grading Periods and Policies and Administration of Statewide Assessment Instruments (8 points)

Oral Interviews for Funding

See the [General and Fiscal Guidelines](#), *Oral Interviews for Funding*.

During the virtual oral interviews, applicants will have the opportunity to elaborate and be evaluated on their planned partnership with a Texas Institute of Higher Education (IHE), as well as answer any additional questions which the TEA may have to assess their readiness for this grant program. The applicant may reference any documents, including the Program Guidelines and FAQs. If LEA funding requests exceed the amount available for this grant, oral interviews may be used according to the following process. If used, applicants that receive 70% of the total points available through the sum of the standard and specific review criteria will be invited to attend an oral interview, which will be conducted virtually.